

S. 1296

At the request of Mrs. McCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1296, a bill to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images.

S. 1303

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1303, a bill to prohibit discrimination in adoption or foster care placements based on the sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status of any prospective adoptive or foster parent, or the sexual orientation or gender identity of the child involved.

S. 1311

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) were added as cosponsors of S. 1311, a bill to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States.

S. 1313

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1313, a bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1315

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1315, a bill to require the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to amend its regulations relating to qualified mortgages, and for other purposes.

S. 1343

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1343, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend and modify certain charitable tax provisions.

S. 1350

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1350, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to the timing of elections and pre-election hearings and the identification of pre-election issues, and to require that lists of employees eligible to vote in organizing elections be provided to the National Labor Relations Board.

S. 1366

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1366, a bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes.

S. 1368

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Louisiana

(Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1368, a bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1369

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1369, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish an excise tax on certain prescription drugs which have been subject to a price spike, and for other purposes.

S. 1377

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1377, a bill to remove the limitation on certain amounts for which large non-rural hospitals may be reimbursed under the Healthcare Connect Fund of the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes.

S. 1379

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1379, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit fellowship and stipend compensation to be saved in an individual retirement account.

S. 1389

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1389, a bill to allow the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to provide greater protection to servicemembers.

S. 1393

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1393, a bill to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses.

S. CON. RES. 7

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 7, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that tax-exempt fraternal benefit societies have historically provided and continue to provide critical benefits to the people and communities of the United States.

S. CON. RES. 12

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 12, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that those who served in the bays, harbors, and territorial seas of the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, should be presumed to have served in the Republic of Vietnam for all purposes under the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

S. RES. 102

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from California

(Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 102, a resolution reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Mexico, and recognizing bilateral cooperation that advances the national security and national interests of both countries.

S. RES. 195

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 195, a resolution recognizing June 20, 2017, as "World Refugee Day".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1419. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, four years ago, a narrow majority of the Supreme Court struck down the heart of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder*. That 5 to 4 decision crippled the Federal government's ability to protect minority, elderly, and disadvantaged voters across the country. The impact of this disastrous ruling has been even worse than imagined.

Before the ink even dried on the Court's opinion, Republican officials in several States rushed to enact laws making it harder for minorities to vote. Prior to *Shelby County*, the Federal government had the ability to prevent racial discriminatory voting changes from taking effect before those changes occur. Proposed laws and new voting procedures would first have been reviewed by the Federal courts or the Department of Justice to ensure that voting rights would not be harmed if the changes went into effect. But without the full protections of the Voting Rights Act after *Shelby County*, discriminatory laws quickly passed Republican legislatures in several States.

Chief Justice Roberts's majority opinion in *Shelby County* noted several

times that the protections of the Voting Rights Act are no longer appropriate because our “Country has changed.” It is true that our Nation has changed—we have made progress. But there is no question that the scourge of racial discrimination still exists. There are still those within our society intent on suppressing the right to vote and keeping minorities from exercising their constitutional right to participate in our democracy. Since the Shelby County ruling—and now emboldened by the Trump Administration—these forces are more concerning than they have been in decades.

Unfortunately, what has transpired in the aftermath of the Shelby County decision makes the need for the full protections of the Voting Rights Act unmistakably clear. Voter suppression efforts have found renewed life in numerous jurisdictions across the country. Thankfully, in some cases the courts have been able to provide a backstop. Based on strong evidence that hundreds of thousands of minority voters have been disproportionately prevented or discouraged from voting by Republican-enacted voting restrictions, Federal courts have blocked or rolled back many of these laws. Importantly, Federal courts have repeatedly found that these States enacted laws with the intention to discriminate.

Just last month, the Supreme Court left in place the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that blocked North Carolina’s harsh voting restrictions, including a strict photo identification law. The Fourth Circuit concluded that the Republican legislature had passed the law with the intent to racially discriminate against African Americans, and found that “the new provisions target African Americans with almost surgical precision.”

In April of this year, Federal district court ruled for a second time that Texas’s photo ID law was enacted with the intent to racially discriminate and had a racially discriminatory effect on Hispanic and Black voters. This ruling came after the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reaffirmed that the Texas law should be struck down because of its discriminatory effect on minority voters. But just weeks ago, the Republican-led Texas legislature and Governor enacted a new law in an attempt to escape the court’s rulings.

Federal courts in Kansas and North Dakota have also acted as a bulwark against attempts by Republican officials to disenfranchise minority voters. In Kansas, courts have issued rulings rejecting repeated attempts by Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach from making voter registration more difficult. In North Dakota, a Federal district court held that the State’s strict photo ID law disproportionately burdened Native Americans and blocked its implementation in the 2016 election.

These decisions are only the tip of the iceberg of what has transpired since Shelby County. While our courts are acting to guard against attempts to

block minorities from accessing the ballot box, each of these cases requires years of litigation, money, and resources. And these are just the voting changes Republicans are enacting at the State level. Many of the efforts at the local level have gone unnoticed but have equally devastating effects on the voting rights of minorities.

The original Voting Rights Act would have prevented many of these discriminatory laws. But the Supreme Court’s decision has taken this country back to an era before the Civil Rights movement—a bad time in our history where some states openly discriminated against minority voters. We are constantly reminded how costly the fight for voting and civil rights has been in this country. Just yesterday, we marked the 53rd anniversary of three civil rights activists who were killed in Mississippi for registering minorities to vote. James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman gave their lives in 1964 when they were murdered while fighting in Mississippi for racial equality and free access to the ballot box. Their example, and the example of generations of civil rights activists who gave their sweat, blood, and sometimes their lives must inspire us and drive us to do more. It is now imperative for us to do everything in our power to correct the Shelby County decision and reinstate the full protections of the Voting Rights Act for the next generation.

The legislation I am introducing today would restore and update the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2017 not only modernizes the Voting Rights Act in response to Shelby County, it also modernizes the law to provide tools to combat current forms of voter discrimination. This bill responds to calls from community leaders and grassroots activists working in communities whose voting rights have been threatened or suppressed. It responds to voting rights experts and civil rights leader who have called for strong legislation to counter the voter intimidation and patently discriminatory efforts that were unleashed after the Shelby County ruling.

I am proud to introduce this bill with forty-six original cosponsors, nearly every single member of the Democratic caucus. I am also proud to be joined by Senator Durbin, who worked with me to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act in 2006. In addition, the House of Representatives is today introducing a companion bill led by Congresswoman Terri Sewell, Congresswoman Judy Chu, Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham, my friend Congressman John Lewis, and over 175 members of the House Democratic caucus.

We are all joining together to introduce this bill today because we will not let systematic and persistent efforts to suppress Americans’ right to vote go unchecked. We will not stand idly by while this country reverts to a bygone era where it was acceptable to dis-

enfranchise our own citizens because they were Black, Hispanic, or disadvantaged. These unconstitutional and discriminatory efforts deserve a strong response.

Protecting Americans’ constitutional right to vote is not a partisan exercise. The original enactment and every reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act has always been bipartisan. When we last reauthorized the Voting Rights Act in 2006, I worked closely with the Republican chairmen of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees—former Senator Arlen Specter and Representative Jim Sensenbrenner. And past reauthorizations of the Voting Rights Act have been signed into law by Republican presidents.

But now, the Republican majority—in both the House and the Senate—refuses to protect the right to vote, restore the Voting Rights Act, or address other critical civil rights issues. Since the Shelby County decision, Republicans at every level of our government have acted to make it harder to vote. This has become the legacy of today’s Republican Party. They should think seriously about reversing course, rather than trying to reverse the gains we have made in history. One significant step would be to join with us to pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore the historic and critically-needed protections of this landmark civil rights law.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 199—DESIGNATING JUNE 2017 AS “GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH”

Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. GARDNER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HEINRICH, and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. RES. 199

Whereas hundreds of millions of people in the United States participate in outdoor recreation annually;

Whereas Congress enacted the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-249; 130 Stat. 999) to assess and analyze the outdoor recreation economy of the United States and the effects attributable to the outdoor recreation economy on the overall economy of the United States;

Whereas regular outdoor recreation is associated with positive health outcomes and better quality of life;

Whereas outdoor recreation is part of the national heritage of the United States; and

Whereas June 2017 is an appropriate month to designate as “Great Outdoors Month” to provide an opportunity to celebrate the importance of the great outdoors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—